



October 2019

The Vision

News and updates from and about the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services

Eric T. Clark, Commissioner

Guest Columnist: Jessica Brown

Hello. I'm Jessica Brown, DCBS Executive Advisor and Kentucky's lead on the federal Family First Prevention Services Act. I had the chance to meet many of you over the summer as part of our nine regional convenings on Family First. I'd like to update staff on our implementation of this landmark federal law and how it will affect your work and the families we serve.

First, I want to emphasize that this truly will affect all of us – every one of our divisions will be a part of this momentum to keep more families safely together and ensure children in out of home care are with families whenever possible.

So why did we make this commitment while most other states have opted to wait until 2021? We want to be good stewards of an unprecedented opportunity. By implementing this year, we gain the opportunity to draw down federal money to help families sooner rather than later.

Our Child Welfare Transformation came into focus last year and was intensified under the leadership of Commissioner Eric Clark. With the hard work of many DCBS staff and stakeholders we have seen improved options and resources for families and children. Additionally, with the support of our General Assembly, Cabinet leadership, and the Governor and First Lady's Office, our state will be the nation's gold standard of child welfare.

Kentucky is one of only a handful of states committed to implementation on October 1, 2019. So what needs to happen before we are officially a Family First Commonwealth?

We await federal approval of our Title IV-E prevention services plan. We submitted our plan last month and expect to receive feedback any day now. Our plan outlined the prevention services that we intend to offer over the next five years. We are working on a few other vital supports for you. Soon, you can expect to see important updates regarding our Family First implementation. A new SOP release, a TWIST update, and a web based training will be released on October 1. These releases will include critical information on how to identify and refer families to prevention services and important documentation requirements for those services. **Continued on Page 2**



Executive Advisor Jessica Brown

Child Care

- The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) will conduct a federal monitoring visit to review Kentucky's compliance with the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant (CCDF) November 5-7. The Division of Child Care (DCC) had its second pre-visit call on September 25.
- ICF staff, federally support technical assistance to states, came to Kentucky to provide CCDF Fundamentals Orientation to the DCC Leadership Team September 23 – 24.
- DCC Director Sarah Vanover traveled to Birmingham (AL) September 25 – 26 to participate in the ACF Region IV Roundtable Meeting.
- The Expanding High Quality Family Child Care in Kentucky Initiative is moving forward. We are excited to announce all five pilot projects are in the implementation phase.



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Your process for assessing risk, safety and protective capacities with families will remain. Additionally, your Utilization and Review Consultation process when determining whether a child is able to remain safely in a home is necessary and unchanging.

Changes regarding children in out of home care in a congregate care setting will come later.

You should know that long-term changes are in store for DCBS.

Did you know that in SFY19, 96% of the children served through contracted prevention services by DCBS remained safely in their home? That 96% represents approximately 5,000 children. We know that prevention services work, but only a fraction of the services are available to meet the need.

We will be embarking on a journey to expand our system supports and service availability to meet the need. As we've said before, we won't be "flipping a switch" that will make things remarkably different and easy on Day One.

While there is no infusion of new funding, there will be greater access to federal funding reimbursement to use for more prevention services. We will have more opportunities and families will have more hope.

As we gain momentum through federal funding reimbursement and additional appropriations to prevention services, you will see more opportunities to refer families to prevention services in your community.

We know that many of you have experienced waiting lists for the families you are referring to prevention services. Please know that we are working diligently on this issue to address and support quicker access for families.

We know you will have questions about Families First, and we want to hear them. Please email those with the subject line "Families First Ky" to DCBSCommissioner@ky.gov, and we'll do our best to answer you directly and in frequent staff updates.

Thank you for all that you do for Kentucky families. Child welfare belongs to all of us.

Child Care

- The pilot project leads met the first week of September to discuss data collection. The data will be used to help increase the understanding of how quality family child care can be obtained and sustained in the state.
- Many counties are in full swing of holding family community events and activities. Pilot projects will be joining these festivities and look forward to providing information to families about quality family child care and the importance of early education. The pilots will also be equipped with resources and supports to provide to those who are interested in becoming a licensed or certified family child care provider.
- Pilot projects are working closely with community members and other agencies to help support the efforts of this project. The efforts to increase quality family child care is an integral piece of increasing community workforce development. DCC is excited to be a part of the crucial efforts being made to help our most vulnerable population.
- As of September 23, 2019, 50,292 child care staff member background checks have been initiated, with 42,246 background checks being completed through the National Background Check Program.
- The Governor's Office of Early Childhood (GOEC) invited DCC to present at the 2019 School Readiness Summits. The Summits were held in Hopkinsville on September 8 and in Morehead on September 16. The target audience was superintendents, teachers, early care providers, and community organizations. DCC presented an overview of the recent expansions to the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and how CCAP can benefit children and programs in their areas. Learning how these early child care partnerships can work together to touch more families was priceless!

Child Care

- Dr. Lynette Fraga, Executive Director of Child Care Aware of America, presented at the Child Care Aware/DCC all staff meeting on September 13. Dr. Fraga provided an inspirational update and shared the national perspective on Child Care Resource and Referral services. Her presentation focused on efforts to support quality care, diversification and professionalization of the early childhood workforce, family and community engagement, and reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Dr. Fraga emphasized that child care is a big part of the national conversation and reaffirmed the role of Child Care Aware of Kentucky staff to support the current efforts. To learn more about Child Care Aware of America and national trends for Child Care Resource and Referral, please visit <https://www.childcareaware.org/>
- Early Childhood Education-Training Record Information System (ECE-TRIS) continues to explore and develop programmatic changes to support partnering agency staff in effort to improve efficiency for processing credentials, licensing reviews, and completing KY All STARS audits. A specific focus of their work is the collection of education information for early childhood professionals. ECE-TRIS and Child Care Aware coaches are collaborating to communicate the benefits of including education information on teachers' professional development portfolios in ECE-TRIS. ECE-TRIS staff are contributing to several subcommittees to support the Preschool Development Grant activities as administered by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood.
- After the update within the Kentucky Integrated Child Care System (KICCS) around provider notifications, the Kentucky All STARS program saw its largest influx of submissions to date. The Quality Initiatives Section attended the ITERS-3 Reliability Training the week of September 23. During this training, they addressed defining and measuring quality in child care settings, looking at how the rating scales measure quality and the differences between the currently used ITERS-R and the ITERS-3, and completing various activities, i.e. sample situations and video observations.
- DCC continues to dedicate staffing resources to the Preschool Development Grant activities as administered by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood.
- DCC presented with the Department for Public Health Division of Maternal and Child Health and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood on the use of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds for the September 4 Tobacco Settlement Oversight Committee meeting.
- DCC is drafting regulatory amendments to 922 KAR 2:090 and 2:100 to include requirements on contract substitute child care center employees.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The Child Welfare Transformation (CWT) Phase 2 the transition into a teaming structure with a focus on redesigning the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) practice, and to embed CWT into everyday operations as a quality assurance and management process. The CWT workgroups will begin to function as quality assurance (QA) teams that will focus on reviewing data and formulating strategies to address ongoing needs of the agency. The statewide CQI plan is undergoing significant modifications to include ongoing stakeholder engagement, a framework for structured communication throughout all levels of the agency, and a redesign of the local CQI teams. Each QA team will be responsible for tracking and monitoring the progress of the CWT strategies implemented in phase 1 and subsequent strategies developed by the respective team. A key feature of the CQI redesign is the opportunity for the current regional CQI specialists to attend a CQI academy through the Capacity Building Center for States, in an effort to enhance consistency and provide supports to the field. Additionally, the CQI planning team is assessing the current capacity and infrastructure of the existing CQI process, and will be receiving technical support from Chapin Hall as the team moves forward with drafting the new process. Written feedback from the field has been reviewed, and many of the recommendations will be incorporated into the new process. The CQI planning team is scheduled to meet on October 9, 2019 to begin drafting the new process.



Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The Commissioner and the executive leadership team met on September 16, 2019 to review the Executive Dashboard and to discuss additional data the team would like to review. The next meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2019, the Service Region Administrators will be in attendance and included in the discussion.
- Ongoing technical assistance meetings began on September 16, 2019 between Casey Family Programs and the CWT internal leadership team. During the meeting, the team focused on the efforts underway for the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) on October 1, 2019. The team received updates from the FFPSA lead regarding the progress in each of the subcommittees. The next technical assistance meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2019.
- The transition from the current project management structure to a team structure continued with the merger of the governance committees. The former Steering Committee and Stakeholder Advisory Group were combined and membership modified to form the stakeholder group the Strategic External Partners committee. The purpose of this stakeholder group is to support and inform the ongoing work of continually improving the child welfare system. To further the efforts of becoming data-informed, outcome driven, and solution focused, tracking methods for the strategies implemented in CWT Phase 1 are now embedded into each workgroup to support the QA process. The workgroups scopes have been modified into work plans that are focused on outcomes, align with the data indicators, and will be drivers to support the overarching three priority goals of the agency: Safely reduce the number of children entering OOHC, Reduce caseloads, and Improve timeliness to appropriate permanency. Workgroups are scheduled to meet on the following dates:
 - October 1, Workforce Supports
 - October 23, Fiscal Modernization
 - October 24, Supports for Out of Home Care
 - November 7, Permanency
 - November 12, Prevention Supports
- START updates:
 - The 13th Annual KY START Statewide Meeting was held at General Butler State Park.
 - The program is closing out the Title IV-E Waiver effective September 30, 2019.
 - START family mentors participated in panel presentations at the Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC) RESTORE Summits.
 - A START family mentor participated in an interview with a Ozy magazine.
 - START Directors participated in an interview with the Addiction Policy Forum.
- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA/Family First) updates:
 - On September 3, DCBS staff met with members of the judicial community at AOC for an Enhancing Communications meeting. The group was updated on Family First implementation progress and challenges. Additionally, the role of DCBS at the upcoming Judicial College session on Family First was discussed and planning continues. A webinar with Justice Debra Lambert and DCBS Family First lead, Jessica Brown, will be planned to reach a broader audience.
 - On September 11, CWT lead, Family First lead and Assistant Directors from the Division of Protection and Permanency spoke at the AOC Family Services Conference. The session educated the audience on the topics of CWT, Family First, Prevention Services and least restrictive care efforts.



DCBS leadership met with a technical assistance team from Casey Family Programs on Sept. 16.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- On September 10, the CWT lead and Family First lead presented at the Kids are Worth It Conference (KAWI). The session focused on educating the group on the CWT Phase I and Phase II along with Family First preparation and implementation.
- On September 12, Kentucky DCBS staff presented their Title IV-E five year prevention services plan to the Casey Family Programs Family First learning collaborative. The learning collaborative is an opportunity for states to share information about their Family First implementation efforts. This allowed an opportunity for states that have not yet developed or submitted their plans to dialogue around the content in Kentucky's plan and their efforts to submit plans in the near future.
- Throughout the month, efforts continued to finalize revised and newly developed Standards of Practice, web-based training, and iTWIST screens to support frontline staff with a smooth implementation of Family First. All releases are ready to go as of October 1.
- On September 17, Congressional staff held a call facilitated by APHSA to discuss a summary of intended legislation known as the Family First Transition Act (FFTA). FFATA would provide much needed relief for Kentucky and other states implementing Family First. It would allow a Phase-In of 50 percent "Well Supported" requirement for prevention services reimbursement, provide transition funding to help states implement Family First, and provide short-term certainty for states with expiring waivers.
- Throughout the month, efforts continued to finalize revised and newly developed Standards of Practice, web-based training, and iTWIST screens to support frontline staff with a smooth implementation of Family First. All releases are ready to go as of October 1.
- Relative/Kin Services update:
 - DCBS received notice of Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Kinship Navigator Grant funds to support public communications, the Kinship Support Hotline, and a pilot peer-to-peer support program and evaluation through the University of Kentucky.
 - Since early 2018 through September 24, in application of the D.O. v. Glisson ruling to other like cases, DCBS has issued 31,267 foster care maintenance payments totaling over \$26.5 million. DCBS is in process of possibly submitting claims for federal Title IV-E reimbursement to the extent the children's eligibility can be determined. Any federal claiming will be a small fraction of overall costs.
 - DCBS leadership observed the federal hearing on the JBK et al. v. Meier et al. on September 19.
- DCBS, iTWIST staff, and the Office of Legal Services are working to support an interface between the attorneys' system and main protection and permanency database, iTWIST, in support of greater accuracy and reduced data entry for DCBS field staff.
- The Recovery Oriented System of Care meeting was held in Fayette County on September 27, 2019. The group continued discussions surrounding strategies for community partners to become recovery-oriented. Discussion included ways to collaborate across agencies and organizations to ensure families are supported by best practices surrounding recovery. Meetings in Louisville continue to focus on the support assessment for this population.
- The diligent recruitment committee has refocused its efforts. The multiple workgroups have been reduced to two, Retention and Targeted Recruitment. In addition, the Diligent Recruitment lead in DPP, effective September 1, has been charged with providing guidance to the field in developing their recruitment plans in these focused areas.



Family First Lead Jessica Brown and CWT Lead Jennifer Warren presented at Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky's Kids are Worth It Conference (KAWI) On September 10.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The Culture of Safety implementation continues with intensive focus on the child fatality/near fatality internal review process. The new System Safety Review Team in DPP worked with Collaborative Safety to



finalize a review process manual, forms, policy, and the membership in the collaboration meetings that are required by the process.

In September, these items went out for field review and several comments were received. The final versions are scheduled to be released on October 1 to coincide with implementation of the new child fatality/near fatality review model.

- A Respite Provider Tracking System is in development with Training Record Information System (TRIS) with a projected launch anticipated in November or December 2019. This will allow for tracking of current respite providers and create a structure for recruitment.
- The Foster Adoptive Parent Training Steering Committee is scheduled to meet again on October 29, 2019. This group include DCBS staff and university training partners: Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, and Murray State University. Focus on training quality and outcomes is the goal.
- The Transitional Services Branch has worked with the University of Kentucky and the Commissioner's office to develop a highlight video of the Fostering Success Program. The video is expected to be complete in the near-term.
- DCBS will be submitting a Request for Application (RFA) for the Youth Villages program, YV Lifeset, to be implemented in Kentucky. The purpose of the program is to achieve better life outcomes for transition age youth in out of home care. If Kentucky is awarded funds, the program will enhance the impact of services being offered to older youth in Kentucky. The grant funds can be used to support research, evaluation, and technical assistance. The RFA is due on October 15.
- The Prevention Branch:
 - Submitted the first annual Family Preservation report to the Legislative Review Committee (LRC) on 9/11/19, discussing an overall evaluation, including a 96% success rate in children remaining in their home at closure, and recommendations for the program.
 - Begun the review process, after receipt of Request for Proposals (RFPs), for expansion of Parent Engagement Meetings into a second rural location.
 - Attended the National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit in Washington, D.C., which featured a poster session for the Kentucky Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (KSTEP) program.
 - Is preparing to participate in an episode of the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast featuring the Community Collaborations for Children program and Parent Engagement meetings.
 - Attended the last Waiver Grantee meeting in Washington, D.C.
 - Begun preparing the annual Citizen's Review Panel report for submission to the Administration for Children and Families, Legislative Review Committee, and to the Citizen's Review Panel.
 - Begun preparing the last IV-E Waiver Semi-Annual report for submission to the Administration for Children and Families.
- The 2020-2024 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) was submitted on June 28 to the Children's Bureau and is pending approval. The Children's Bureau requested edits which have been made and the plan has been resubmitted for approval. The 2020-2024 CFSP will go into effect 10/1.
- The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to address findings from the federal Child and Family Services Review conducted in July 2016 was approved on April 1 by the Children's Bureau. PIP monitoring will continue for three years from the approval date.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- The PIP Safety Workgroup continued discussion around the development and implementation of the safety model during the September team meeting. The safety workgroup was able to meet with the director of NCCD Children's Research Center to review the evidenced based tools and proposal. An internal meeting was conducted to select which options included in the proposal would be necessary to meet the agency's needs. By the end of September, DPP has the goal that the contract with NCCD will be in the process of being completed.
- DCBS will be working with Capacity Building Center for States on a threshold screening analysis. The threshold screening analysis allows jurisdictions to determine if they are screening in and out the right reports of abuse and neglect.
- The PIP Permanency workgroup has revised the template that is utilized during the regional permanency calls. The group has also developed a template for the regions to follow during their meetings with the court system to review permanency data. These meetings should be fully implemented by the first of the year.
- The Clinical Services Branch (CSB) has begun screening decertification notices from the Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) to determine if DCBS has any concerns about the decertification. If there are concerns identified, these decertification notices are being forwarded to Dr. Lohr for a peer-to-peer consult with the MCO. This new process, which went into effect under the new MCO contracts in July, is anticipated to reduce the decertifications for acute psychiatric when DCBS is not in agreement. In September, the branch completed seven reviews. On September 20, there were 27 children decertified in their psychiatric placement settings. As of September 20, the CSB had completed 30 consult calls with field staff for the month. Through concerted efforts to identify appropriate treatment settings for these youth, these numbers are decreasing and are the lowest in five years.
- The Memorandum of Understanding is final with Kentucky's Kids Belong to promote adoption awareness for children registered with KAPE. On September 19, 12 children were filmed. The First Lady and Chris Johnson from the Governor's office attended this filming. The feedback received was overwhelming positive. The next filming on November 13 in Lexington will include the filming of 20 children.
- The Adoption Branch is working with Thursday's Child to coordinate a Christmas party for children registered with KAPE for December in Lexington at Gatti Town.
- Staff from the Adoption and Out of Home Care Branches attended the Adoption Call to Action Summit in Washington, DC on August 22 and 23. Tasks surrounding the Adoption Call to Action have begun on both branches.
- DPP is working with the cabinet's technology staff to automate the DPP-886a, which is currently known as the Application for Referral and Needs Assessment, in the near-term. The new process will allow for placements searches and requests for level of care to be submitted electronically to the Children's Review Program and support auto-population of data. Staff will continue to submit requests to CRP electronically until SOP guidance is issued instructing staff to begin submitting through iTWIST to allow time for training.
- Emergency amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:310, Standards for child-placing agencies; 922 KAR 1:350, Requirements for public child welfare agency foster parents, adoptive parents, and respite care providers; and 922 KAR 1:495, Training requirements for foster parents, adoptive parents, and respite care providers for children in the custody of the cabinet. These amendments were filed and effective immediately on April 1, 2019. The amendments incorporate new federal model standards for foster homes and establish a new foster home type referred to as "child specific foster homes," which are designed for relative or fictive kin caregiver placements. The amendments include lessened requirements, a per diem, and a waiver review process for the new child specific foster home type. Comments were received on these administrative regulations during the public comment period that ended on May 31, 2019, and the administrative regulations were further amended. The further-amended versions passed legislative review and went into effect on September 9, 2019.
- Amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:560, Putative father registry, and 922 KAR 1:565, Service array for a relative or fictive kin caregiver, on July 11, 2019. These amendments are necessary for consistency with legislation that passed in the 2019 Regular Session, specifically House Bills 2, 158, and 446. Public comments were not received during the public comment period and the amendments passed their first legislative review on September 16, 2019. These latest amendments are anticipated to go into effect on November 1, 2019.

Protection and Permanency: Child Welfare

- Emergency and ordinary amendments were filed to 922 KAR 1:320, Service appeals, on July 1, 2019, with the emergency regulation taking effect immediately. The amendment to this administrative regulation aligns appeals and complaint procedures with 2019 Ky. Acts ch. 073 and 033, House Bills 2 and 158 from the 2019 Regular Session respectively, and makes other technical corrections in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A. More specifically, the amendment incorporates the new service array for relative and fictive kin caregivers, new service and notice provision to foster parents, and the foster youth bill of rights. Public comments requesting minor clarifications were received during the public comment period and an Amended After Comments version of the administrative regulation has been drafted for October filing.
- DCBS and Protection and Permanency leadership attended multiple legislative committees featuring issues such as foster children and child abuse or neglect reporting and spoke to committees or sent follow-up information as appropriate.
- Staff from the Transitional Services Branch are scheduled to present to the Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare, and Family Services with members of the Voices of the Commonwealth on Transition Age Youth in Kentucky on September 30, 2019.

Protection and Permanency: Adult Services

- Adult Protective Services (APS) branch staff of the Division of Protection and Permanency (DPP) attended the Elder Abuse Committee (mandated under KRS 209.005) meeting on September 5. The committee is comprised of various agency representatives along with other organizational units outside of the Cabinet. The committee collaborates to discuss ways to address issues of prevention, intervention, investigation, and agency coordination of services.
- Adult and Child Protection Branches' staffs conducted refresher training with Jefferson Centralized Intake units on September 25, 2019.
- DCBS and the Department for Medicaid Services are collaborating to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure better coordination and communication for 1915C waiver participants.
- APS Branch staff attended the Attorney General's Office 4th Annual Senior Summit on September 19 and set up a public awareness table at the event.
- APS branch staff continue to serve as the liaison for the statewide Local Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse and continues to have monthly communication with councils throughout the state.

Family Support

- The Division of Family Support (DFS) is excited to have received approval from the federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to complete pilot demonstration project in which call center staff in Jefferson County will be able to complete Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) interviews. This will relieve burdens on state staff in the Jefferson office so that a more human-centered, positive experience can be afforded clients--with the worker focusing on quality of service, rather than feeling rushed and overwhelmed.
- Family Self Sufficiency Branch Manager, Tonya Feese, and DFS Director, Douglas Beard, attended the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant State Summit in Arlington, VA. The theme was "H2O, Helping families 2 Overcome." Several testimonies were shared concerning individuals who had been directly impacted by TANF funded programs. Strategies were also shared that could be beneficial to implement here in Kentucky. Currently, the division is preparing for an upcoming Policy Panel in October to address matters related to Medicaid, Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program, and Child Care Assistance Program.



Family Support

- Currently, the division is preparing for an upcoming Policy Panel in October to address matters related to Medicaid, Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program, and Child Care Assistance Program.
- Training around human-centered design and its relevance to the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program is being completed currently in Floyd and Warren counties. Both Floyd and Warren will be a part of the pilot program set to launch Oct 1. Focusing on the concepts developed from DCBS recent human-centered design research.
- DFS was excited to attend the Fatherhood Summit in Lexington on September 27 to present public assistance resources administered through DCBS for which many fathers are potentially eligible to receive.
- SNAP E&T training is taking place during the month of September in PATHS to PROMISE Counties. This program is available to all SNAP recipients between the ages of 16 and 59 and is a great option for able-bodied adults without dependents who must comply with work requirements. Waivers exempting the work requirement in our Paths to promise counties are set expire December 31st.
- DFS presented to the Commissioner during September ideas for improving the quality of service provided to customers as well as the accuracy of tasks and achievements as they are reported to the federal government. To this end, DFS will met with family support Service Region Administrator Associates beginning in October.
- DFS has been asked to speak to Kentucky's decision to join or not join the state pilot for the SNAP National Accuracy Clearinghouse at the October 7 Public Assistance Reform Task Force meeting. Family Support has also been requested to present on the use of drug screening in public assistance programs at the October 30 meeting of the task force. Preparations are underway for these meetings. Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Caywood serves as a member of the task force on behalf of DCBS.
- Family Support has a number of administrative regulation amendments in the works for housekeeping updates and compliance with House Bill 50 (Regular Session 2017) concerning administrative regulations that are seven years or older.



General Operations

- The Division of Administration and Financial Management is starting to work on the next biennial budget that will be due by the end of October.
- Records Management Section has seen an influx of background check requests since school has started. They are processing most requests within two weeks of receipt. In August, they processed the following:
 - 2,024 Foster/Adoptive Background Checks
 - 397 Kinship Background Checks
 - 8,273 Central Registry Checks
- Contracts Section processed 78 invoices for payment, submitted 8 contracts for modifications, submitted 2 contracts for execution, submitted 4 MOUs. They also completed 37 onsite monitoring visits during August and updated on contract monitoring tool, along with answering APA questions.
- Training:
 - 34 new DCBS staff attending the September 2019 protection and permanency training academy at Western Kentucky University.
 - 19 supervisors attending the September 2019 Protection and Permanency Advanced Supervisory Series at the University of Kentucky.
 - SNAP Deduction Refresher (competency-based) training was launched to the field on September 16 with sessions being scheduled two times per day to accommodate the need.

General Operations

- SNAP Household Refresher is currently in development with a November launch date.
- SNAP, Child Care Assistance Program, and Medicaid MAGI training for Conduent Staff was developed and launched. The training includes online pre-work and classroom-based training.
- The Training Branch has scheduled the Worker Portal Functions for Supervisors for the Deloitte team with planned provisions of data evaluation upon completion.
- In August 2019, 2,498 DCBS employees, foster/adoptive parents, and community partner staff attended at least one training event provided by the University Training Consortium/DCBS Training Branch.
- 1,438 DCBS employees and foster/adoptive parents attended the regional Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) Child Welfare and OUD/SUD training events.



Southern Bluegrass staff attend Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) training in Richmond this summer. It was one of nine regional training events to help staff assist families with substance use disorder to achieve recovery.

Self-Care Corner

Anyone can master the superpower of calm with a technique called Box Breathing.

Box Breathing is a powerful yet simple relaxation technique that aims to return breathing to its normal rhythm when you are excited or anxious. It may help to clear the mind, relax the body and improve focus.

The exercise is also known as resetting your breath, tactical breathing or square breathing – so named because you can make an outline of a square with your finger in the air or in your mind while you do it. It is easy, quick to learn, and can be a highly effective technique for people in stressful situations to reach calm in under a minute.

People in high-stress jobs can use Box Breathing when their bodies are in fight-or-flight mode. It's also relevant for anyone interested in re-centering themselves or improving concentration. It can be done anywhere, anytime - no tools needed.

Here are the steps to Box Breathing:

- Close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose while counting to four slowly. Feel the air enter your lungs.
- Hold your breath inside while counting slowly to four. Try not to clamp your mouth or nose shut. Simply avoid inhaling or exhaling for 4 seconds.
- Begin to slowly exhale for 4 seconds.
- Repeat steps 1 to 3 at least three times. Ideally, repeat the three steps for 4 minutes, or until calm returns.

